LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) A method of manufacturing syntactic foam including the steps of:

providing a predetermined ratio of constituent materials including a liquid phase binder and microspheres that are naturally buoyant in that binder;

blending the constituent materials into a mixture and placing the mixture into a mould;

allowing the microspheres to float to the top of the mixture;

draining excess liquid phase binder from the mould; and

allowing the remaining liquid phase binder to set or cure between the microspheres.

2. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the microspheres are allowed to float to the top of the mixture until they become close packed.

3. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 2 or wherein the microspheres become close packed in a density approaching the natural microsphere bulk density.

4. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~either~~ claim 2 ~~or claim 3~~ wherein the step of allowing the microspheres to float to the top of the mixture until they become close packed is facilitated by selecting a liquid phase binder composition that has sufficiently low viscous drag characteristics, and sufficiently long curing time, to allow the microspheres to become close packed before the binder cures.

5. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 4 wherein the liquid phase binder composition is selected by adding a predetermined amount of diluent.

6. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 5 wherein the liquid phase binder includes an expoxy resin with hardener, and the diluent comprises acetone.

7. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1

wherein the excess liquid phase binder is drained from the bottom of the mould.

8. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed ~~in claim 7 when dependent upon claim 2~~ in claim 2 wherein the liquid phase binder is drained from the bottom of the mould until the close packed microspheres reach the bottom of the mould.

9. (Currently Amended) A syntactic foam article comprising close packed microspheres bound together by a cured, originally liquid phase binder, manufactured by a method according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1.